

Cumberland Artifact Processing Procedures

General Reminders:

- Only work with one unit per work space at a time.
- Retain field bag(s) with artifacts ~~in~~ until all materials are labelled.
- If the unit is only partially completed at end of shift, make sure the artifacts are safely stored on a shelf with all identifying material, etc. kept together.
- Finally, remember that all the careful separation of ~~un~~provenienenced units that has occurred up 'til now can be negated by careless handling during cataloging.

Standard Procedures:

For non-water screened units (everything but features -- those units with both a number and letter designation, 92 F-1 for ex.):

- (1) Dump (gently!) all materials from a single unit out on to newspaper (check the bag and make sure all artifacts are out).
- (2) Separate artifacts ~~in~~ according to gross types:
 - ceramics
 - worked stone
 - unworked stone
 - fossil stone
 - bone
 - horn
 - shell
 - other
- (3) Label the following: (see below)
 - ceramics
 - worked stone
 - unworked stone: jasper, rhyolite, chert
 - bone
 - horn
 - (small organic material, if too small to bagel, place in small labelled ziploc)
- (4) Catalogue (see below)
- (5) Quantify by weight as to type:
 - unworked stone: quartz, quartzite, schist, hematite,
(discard following entering quant. in cat.)
 - fossil stone (retain separately)
 - shell (discard)

Labelling:

The labels applied to the artifacts will vary both from each individual excavation/collection unit and from the type of collection as well. The types of collections include one rapid assessment and two controlled surface collections, as well as materials from actual excavation. For analytical purposes, those four collections will remain separate and thus must be labelled accordingly. Each artifact (except in special cases) that is retained will be labelled according to the following:

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→ All artifacts will be labelled with the site's trinomial designation -- 18 Cv 171.

Next, according to the type of collection, each artifact will receive one of the following designations:

→ Rapid assessment -- 1Δ

Controlled surface collection no. one -- 1S

Controlled surface collection no. two -- 2S

(for excavation, see below)

Then, each artifact will be labelled according to collection unit designation, ie. 4, 26, 350, etc.

Thus, sample labels for the first three collections would be:

18Cv171/1Δ/420 -- Rapid assess.

18Cv171/1S/312 -- C.S.C. 1

18Cv171/2S/12 -- C.S.C. 2

As for excavated artifacts, their label will consist of only two components -- site number and excavation unit:

18Cv171/92 F-1

as shown on bag

Labels should be written as small as possible while still being legible (remember, if it's not legible it does no good). On ceramics, apply label to inner side of sherd (inside of curve). On other materials, wherever easiest. The labelling process generally consists of two steps: writing the label and after it is dry applying clear-seal over the label. On some stones, a clear-seal undercoat will be necessary to keep the ink from running. On pottery, a white-out undercoat will probably be necessary for the ink to show up clearly.

Cataloging:

It isn't possible here to go into detail on all the variations/vagaries of cataloging and cataloging nomenclature -- we will talk to you about that in person. But the basic order will be:

Cataloging order:

- Ceramics
- worked stone:
 - projectile points
 - drills
 - ax
 - celt
 - bifaces
 - scrapers
 - unifaces
 - cores
 - flakes (primary, secondary, tertiary)
 - chips
 - grinding stone
 - hammer stone

unworked stone:

quartz
quartzite
schist
hematite
fossil stone

} Quant. + discard

. Quant. + save separately

bone

horn

beads

misc.

oyster shell

Each catalogue entry will consist of the number of items and a short description of the artifact or artifact group. Projectile points, bifaces, etc. will generally be catalogued ~~separately~~ ^{individually}. Ceramics, flakes, bone, unworked stone, shell, and others may best be catalogued in groups.

Ex.

No.

Description

1 - white quartz projectile point fragment, distal end (Vernon)

12 - sherds undecorated shell-tempered pottery

6lb.4oz. - unworked white quartzite

4lbloz. - oyster shell

The object of cataloging is to provide preliminary artifact identification -- more intense analysis of the diagnostic materials (pottery, p.p.s, etc.) will be undertaken later. This is an important process, however, and care must be taken.

^{Fill}
Assign the artifact to the most specific category possible, ie. a projectile point is also a biface, but designation of it as a projectile point is a more precise identification.

The procedure for processing water-screened units is largely the same. The major difference will be the higher volume of small materials and the greater care and patience required.